

By-laws

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Elkhart, Indiana

Article 1. NAME

The name of this religious society is the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Inc. of Elkhart, Indiana.

Article 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Fellowship is to bring together those who believe in free inquiry into matters of religion. We believe in the discipline of and the search for truth, irrespective of its source, and in the spirit of universal brotherhood. We unite to express our convictions in the value and need for liberal religion. Bound by no dogma, but relying upon reason as our guide, with freedom and responsibility, and with an awareness of the interconnected web of all life, we seek to grow in understanding of ourselves and of our world and to serve humanity.

Article 3. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

This Fellowship shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the MidAmerica Region of the UUA. We subscribe to their constitutions and by-laws, but reaffirm the independence and autonomy of local churches and fellowships, both as to individual freedom of belief and congregational freedom of decision and action.

Article 4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Qualifications for Membership:

- 4.1.1 Any person may become a member of this Fellowship by:
 - demonstrating sympathy with its purpose and program;
 - demonstrating an understanding of its By-laws;
 - supporting it through financial and personal participation as able;
 - and
 - signing the Membership Book;
- 4.1.2 It is generally expected that prospective members will have had a discussion of the Unitarian Universalist movement with the minister or such other person as the Board of Trustees (herein after referred to as the “Board”) may designate.
- 4.1.3 It is specifically understood that membership is open to all qualified persons regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.
- 4.1.4 Each new member shall receive a copy of these By-laws. Upon revision, copies shall be available to the membership.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

4.1.5 Members who by reason of health have not been able to participate in church affairs and members who by reason of financial hardship have not been able to make a monetary contribution, are nonetheless viewed by the church as being members.

4.2 *Voting members*

4.2.1 Voting members are those members of the Fellowship who have attained the age of 16 years and have experienced an educational process, as outlined above, about Unitarian Universalism.

4.2.2 Voting at any and all congregational meetings is limited to those members who have been members for at least 60 calendar days prior to the meeting.

4.3 *Removal from Membership*

4.3.1 The Board shall remove a person from membership when that person has died.

4.3.2 The Board may remove a person from membership when that person has not been active in supporting the Fellowship by financial or personal participation. Such removal shall take effect 60 days after notice of the action has been sent to the member's last known email and street address.

4.3.3 In the event that a member's actions are abusive or destructive to the extent that they pose a threat to the well-being of this Fellowship or to its members, every attempt at resolution shall be made, including, but not limited to, ministerial intervention and/or communication with the officers and/or other options explored, including the use of a trained mediator. If the Board determines that it has no other recourse but to initiate a process for removing an individual from membership, the following procedures must be followed to ensure protection of the rights of that member and the congregation:

- a. The member must be notified by certified mail, return receipt requested (hereafter referred to as CMRR), of the reasons that the Board feels it is necessary to remove the individual from membership. The letter should include an attempt to arrange a time for the member to meet with the President, the Secretary, and the chair of the Membership Committee, and must state that the member shall have 30 days from date of mailing in which to respond.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

- b. If the member does not respond to the first letter within 30 days, a second copy of the letter shall be sent (CMRR). If, after 30 days from the second mailing, the member still does not respond, the Board shall be authorized to vote on removal from membership at its next meeting.
- c. The member, once notified and having responded, must be invited to attend any and all Board meetings at which one's removal from membership will be discussed. The member may have a witness present at any or all meetings in this process.
- d. The Board Secretary, or designee, shall take notes at any and all meetings in this process.
- e. A three-quarter majority of the Board (5 of 7 board members) must vote in favor of removal for membership to be terminated. The individual shall be notified in writing of the decision (CMRR).
- f. During this process and afterward, the option for reconciliation shall remain open. In the event that the individual wishes to re-establish connection and/or membership, the individual, the Board, and the minister shall work together to formulate a plan for reconciliation based on the particular circumstances of the situation.
- g. No one shall be removed from membership because of one's beliefs, theology, or philosophy.

4.3.4 An individual may request removal from membership by submitting a written request to the Membership Committee or Board.

4.4 *Membership Lists*

The Membership Committee and the church minister shall prepare updated lists of members and friends. The updated lists will be approved by the Board as required by the UUA.

Article 5. MEETINGS

- 5.1 The annual congregational meeting shall be held each year on the third Sunday in May at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Board. The purpose of the annual meeting shall be to elect officers and trustees, elect members of the nominating committee, elect members of the Endowment Committee, elect delegates to the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, adopt the budget for the next fiscal year, and to hear officers', minister's, and committee reports. In extreme situations the Board may permit the annual meeting to take place remotely through Zoom or other appropriate digital platform.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

- 5.2 Special meetings may be called by the President, or in the absence of the President, by the President-elect. Special meetings may also be called at the written request of three Board members, or any five voting members of the congregation.
- 5.3 The business transacted at all congregational meetings shall be limited to that specified in the call to the meeting. The call to a meeting shall be issued to the entire membership not less than 7 days nor more than 30 days prior to the meeting, via individual mailing, congregational newsletter, and/or individual email (to members who have specifically opted for electronic communications).
- 5.4 A quorum at any regular or special congregational meeting shall consist of 25% of the voting membership. (Exception: Meetings held to call or dismiss a minister - See Article 9). The vote on any matter shall be by secret ballot at the request of any member; otherwise it is done by voice vote. In the event of an electronic distance meeting, secret ballots will be by direct message to the Secretary. The exact vote on any matter shall be recorded in the minutes of the Fellowship meeting upon the request of any voting member. Absentee ballots shall be available to members who cannot attend a given meeting for reasons of incapacitation or travel. All absentee ballots shall be in writing and specifically state the issue and how the absentee ballot is to be voted. Absentee ballots must be conveyed in duplicate, one copy to the President and one copy to the Secretary.
- 5.5 Delegates to the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly shall hold office for one year.

Article 6. OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

- 6.1 BOARD OF TRUSTEES. There shall be a Board comprised of seven voting members: President, President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and three 3-year Trustees.
- 6.1.1 No member may simultaneously hold more than one of these seven positions.
- 6.1.2 A member of the Board must be a voting member of the Fellowship during the entire Term of Office.
- 6.2 ELECTION. Members of the Board shall be elected by the Fellowship at the Annual Meeting.
- 6.2.1 Each year a President-elect and a 3-year Trustee shall be elected.
- 6.2.2 In odd-numbered years, a Secretary shall be elected.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

- 6.2.3 In even-numbered years, a Treasurer shall be elected.
- 6.2.4 If the office of President-elect is vacant at the time of the Annual Meeting, a President shall be elected.
- 6.2.5 In the event that the Nominating Committee has filled a vacant position on the Board and if more than six months remain in the Fiscal Year, a special election by electronic or mail-in balloting shall be held for that position within 60 days to fill the position..
- 6.3 TERM OF OFFICE.
- 6.3.1 Members of the Board elected at the Annual Meeting shall assume office on July 1st.
- 6.3.2 The President shall serve for one year, except as provided in Subsections 6.4.2 and 6.7.1.
- 6.3.3 The President-elect shall serve for one year as President-elect and then shall assume the office of President, except as provided in Section 6.7.
- 6.3.4 The Secretary shall serve for two years.
- 6.3.5 The Treasurer shall serve for two years.
- 6.3.6 The 3-year Trustees shall each serve for three years.
- 6.4 TERM LIMITS.
- 6.4.1 No one shall serve as President for more than two consecutive years.
- 6.4.2 No President shall be re-elected to a consecutive term as President except when the office of President-elect is vacant at the time of the Annual Meeting.
- 6.4.3 No Term Limits shall apply to the offices of Secretary or Treasurer.
- 6.4.4 No one shall serve as a 3-year Trustee for more than five of the previous six years.
- 6.4.5 No member may be elected to a position if that member is unable to serve the whole term.
- 6.5 DUTIES. The Board and its members shall perform those duties specified in these By-laws or in Policy.
- 6.5.1 The Board shall serve as a legislative body while performing or delegating the executive, managerial, and supervisory duties of the Fellowship. The Board shall meet at least six times during the Fiscal Year.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

- 6.5.2 QUORUM A minimum of 4 of 7 Board members must be present to convene a meeting.
- 6.5.3 The Board may make any decision or take any action on behalf of the Fellowship unless prohibited by these By-laws or by prior vote of a Congregational Meeting.
- 6.5.4 The members of the Board shall act in accordance with the best interests of the Fellowship.
- 6.5.5 The Board is responsible for all fiduciary concerns and shall perform these obligations without compensation.
- 6.5.6 The President shall preside at all Congregational Meetings and at all meetings of the Board. The President will work closely with the President-elect to ensure that the President-elect understands the duties of the president and issues facing the Board, providing continuity in leadership.
- 6.5.7 The President-elect shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President.
- 6.5.8 The Secretary shall maintain the minutes of the meetings of the Fellowship and the Board, oversee the preservation of records, and shall work with the Membership Committee to maintain lists of members and friends.
- 6.5.9 The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the Fellowship and shall oversee the preparation of the yearly budget.
- 6.5.10 A member of the Board may attend, and will be considered present, if the member is participating in the meeting via electronic communication.
- 6.5.11 The Board shall be responsible for all UUFE policies. The Board will develop a Policy Manual with policies that support the Bylaws and the work of the church, guiding the Governance and ministries of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Elkhart. All policies must be approved by the Board and placed in the Policy Manual.
- 6.5.12 The Board has oversight over all committees of the Fellowship, and may intervene whenever a committee is not meeting on a regular basis or is failing to carry out duties assigned to it by the Board or Policy.
- 6.6 REMOVAL
- 6.6.1 Any member of the Board may be removed with the approval of the other six members of the Board.
- 6.6.2 Any member of the Board who misses three consecutive meetings may be removed by a vote of the Board.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

- 6.7 VACANCIES. A vacancy can occur because of resignation, death, or removal.
- 6.7.1 If there is a vacancy in the office of President, the President-elect shall immediately assume the office of President to fill the unexpired term. A President-elect who assumes the Presidency in this way shall also serve their own term as President in the subsequent year.
- 6.7.2 If there is a vacancy in the office of President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, or Trustee, the Nominating Committee shall select a temporary replacement who shall serve until a permanent replacement is elected by the Fellowship to fill the unexpired term.
- 6.7.3 Any member of the Board who wishes to resign his or her position as an officer or trustee shall do so by giving written notification to the President or any other officer of the Board.

Article 7. COMMITTEES

- 7.1 ELECTED COMMITTEES. There shall be two Committees whose members are elected by the Fellowship: the Endowment Committee and the Nominating Committee.
- 7.2 ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE. There shall be a five-member Endowment Committee.
- 7.2.1 The Endowment Committee shall manage all endowment funds pursuant to the Policies that created them.
- 7.2.2 A member of the Endowment Committee must be a voting member of the Fellowship during the entire term on the Committee.
- 7.2.3 No member of the Endowment Committee is restricted from holding another elected or appointed position.
- 7.2.4 Each year members of the Endowment Committee shall be elected who shall assume office on July 1st.
- 7.2.5 A member of the Endowment Committee shall serve for three years.
- 7.2.6 No member of the Endowment Committee shall serve for more than two consecutive terms.
- 7.2.7 No member of the Endowment Committee may be elected who is unable to serve the whole term.
- 7.2.8 The Endowment Committee shall elect a chair who shall serve for one year.
- 7.2.9 The Endowment Committee shall meet at least once a year.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

- 7.2.10 A member of the Endowment Committee may be removed with the approval of 5 of 7 members of the Board.
- 7.2.11 If there is a vacancy on the Endowment Committee, the Nominating Committee shall select a temporary replacement who shall serve until a permanent replacement is elected by the Fellowship to fill the unexpired term.
- 7.2.12 The Endowment Committee shall provide a report at the Annual Meeting and a quarterly report to the Board.
- 7.3 NOMINATING COMMITTEE. There shall be a five member Nominating Committee: the immediate past Board President, the current President-elect, and three voting members of the congregation, two of whom are not members of the Board.
- 7.3.1 The Nominating Committee shall nominate individuals to fill positions required for the next term. Those accepting nomination will be placed on the slate for approval by the Fellowship.
- 7.3.2 Every member of the Nominating Committee must be a voting member of the Fellowship during the entire term on the Committee.
- 7.3.3 Each year, one member of the Nominating Committee shall be elected by the membership. This individual shall serve for three years.
- 7.3.4 All members of the Nominating Committee shall assume office on July 1st.
- 7.3.5 No elected member of the Nominating Committee shall serve for more than five of the previous six years.
- 7.3.6 No member of the Nominating Committee may be elected who is unable to serve the whole term.
- 7.3.7 The Nominating Committee shall select a chair who shall serve for one year. Generally this is the president-elect unless that person cannot serve the term.
- 7.3.8 A member of the Nominating Committee may be removed with the approval of 5 of 7 members of the Board.
- 7.3.9 If an elected position on the Nominating Committee becomes vacant, the Nominating Committee shall select a temporary replacement who shall serve until a permanent replacement is elected by the Fellowship to fill the unexpired term.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

- 7.3.10 If a member of the Nominating Committee is under consideration to fill a position, that member shall recuse oneself from all discussions by the Committee on that position.
- 7.4 **STANDING COMMITTEES.** Standing Committees may be created by Policy.
- 7.4.1 The Policy which creates a committee shall specify the scope of the committee's responsibility as well as how the membership and committee chair are selected.
- 7.4.2 A Standing Committee may form subcommittees unless prohibited by the Policy which created it.
- 7.5 **SUBCOMMITTEES.** Only a Standing Committee may create subcommittees.
- 7.6 **AD HOC COMMITTEES.** Ad Hoc Committees may only be created by the Board. A record of the members of the ad hoc committee and its purpose shall be recorded by the Secretary. An Ad Hoc Committee formed by the Board ceases to exist when the task assigned to it is deemed to be complete by the Board.

Article 8. FISCAL YEAR

The Fiscal Year is July 1 to June 30. The budget for said Fiscal Year shall be adopted by a majority vote of the congregation present and voting at the Annual Meeting.

Article 9. THE MINISTER

- 9.1 The minister shall be called by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at a regular or special congregational meeting, provided a quorum is present. A quorum, for a congregational meeting convened to call or dismiss a minister, shall consist of 40% of the voting membership. A two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular or special meeting (provided a quorum is present) shall be necessary for dismissal.

It shall be the duty of the minister to make a full report to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

- 9.2 The minister is expected to attend all Board meetings, shall bring to the attention of the Board all matters which seem pertinent to the general welfare of the congregation, and shall make such recommendations as seem proper. However, the final decision in matters of policy and procedure shall remain with the Board or the congregation through a regular or special meeting. The minister may be

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

asked to leave the room during discussions related to the minister's performance or compensation at any annual congregational, Board, or committee meeting.

Article 10. AMENDMENTS

These By-laws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at the annual or any special meeting of the Fellowship by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, providing that a quorum is present at the meeting. Proposed changes shall be announced at least 27 days prior to the meeting and shall be contained in a written notice sent to the membership postmarked, emailed, or hand delivered at least 13 days prior to the meeting. These By-laws must be reviewed every five years. This date will be calculated from the final approved amendment date listed below. If changes are proposed, they are to be voted upon and approved by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting, as described on Article 5.

Article 11. DISSOLUTION

Should this Fellowship cease to function and the membership vote to disband, any accrued assets of the Fellowship will be assigned to the Unitarian Universalist Association if any remain after payment of all debts.

Article 12. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of "*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*" shall govern the Fellowship in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these By-laws and any special rules of order the Fellowship may adopt.

By-laws
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Elkhart, Indiana

These By-laws originally accepted at joint congregational – Board meeting held March 3, 1963.

Amended: annual meeting: March 6, 1963
Article IX amended at annual meeting: April 21, 1968
Articles IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X amended at annual meeting: April 29, 1979
Articles IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, and X amended at special meeting: September 28, 1986
Article IV amended at annual meeting: April 30, 1989
Articles III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII amended and Article XIII added at annual meeting: April 28, 1991
Articles II, V, VII, VIII, and X amended at annual meeting: April 24, 1994
Articles IV and VI amended at annual meeting: May 19, 1996
Article IV amended at special meeting: February 15, 1998
Article IV amended at special meeting: June 21, 1998
Article VI amended at annual meeting: May 20, 2001
Articles VI, VII, and VIII amended at special meeting: April 21, 2002
Articles V and VII amended at annual meeting May 19, 2003
Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 and 11 amended at the annual meeting May 20, 2012
Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 amendments presented at special meeting January 15, 2023; 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 renumbered and amendments presented at special meeting January 15, 2023. Changes approved at special meeting March 5, 2023.